

AMATEUR TRAMPERS IN NORMANDY AND BRITTANY.

CONTINUED.

Equipment is a serious matter, how serious only a Ways and Means Committee can properly appreciate. Our consideration of it began by deciding that a necessary part of it was the addition of another member to our party, and to our joy, we secured the promise of his company. He is referred to throughout these notes shortly, if not sweetly, as Pip. In ordinary life, however, he is one of the Committee's oldest and most valued friends and one of their most frequent visitors. He is the happy possessor of a fund of good nature absolutely proof against attack, a positive genius for irresponsibility, takes an interest in everything, and has a slight but fascinating stammer, just sufficiently marked to add point to his humour. His company assured, he was added to our councils, and took a prominent part in the first discussion as to what we should carry. His casting vote was early necessary in the all important division on the subject of *bath*. Cleanliness is said to be next to godliness, and it seemed fitting therefore, in view of the Committee's before-mentioned connection with the Church, that the "To be or not to be" of this part of the equipment should be the first to be considered. There had been brought to my notice by an individual who can certainly be described as an experienced traveller, a description of a portable bath, the chief points of which, so far as the committee could discover by careful reading and examination, were:—

1st. That it cost a guinea, and

2nd. That it could be put in an envelope.

These two statements seem irreconcilable as applied to the matter of a bath, and the sensible member (no names given) voted that a sample be obtained on approval. It was got, and resembled an enormous water bed, folded up, and had a horribly "sickroomish" look. It would besides in itself have constituted a heavy load for even "Modestine." A member of the committee after one cursory glance at it, vulgarly asserted

that she, at least, would rather go dirty than carry it. The subject therefore dropped, amid a certain amount of coolness, and the third member of committee proposed that the meeting should discuss something that was *really* needed,—“Like a knapsack, eh, What?” he said.

There is a good deal of difference of opinion among travellers on the subject of knapsacks. Many people prefer what is known as a “Rucksack,” which consists of a bag fastening across the shoulders, with the mouth opening and closing by strings, and into which things can be put anyhow. We, however, decided on “Knapsacks” proper. Those we got, we obtained through Gamage in High Holborn, and they cost us 11s. 6d. apiece. They were divided into three compartments, two small side ones into which one's toilet articles and smaller conveniences could be packed, and remain readily accessible without unstrapping the main part, and a centre division into which went one's changes of clothing, and a flap cover to this division, with the inside made like a hold-all. They were backed with cane so that one's shoulders and back could not be chafed by any bulging caused by the packing, and were fastened by straps going over the shoulders and under the arm-pits, *without* crossing the chest. They were made of some waterproof material, and we found them extremely convenient. We each carried in our knapsack the following articles, and we give the list itemized because the comfort and pleasure of a walking tour can be most materially affected by any mistake in this connection:—

Two changes summer underwear.

Three pairs socks or stockings.

One pair soft shoes or slippers for evening.

Sponge, hairbrush, tooth powder, small clothes brush, small nail brush, tooth brush, small tin foot powder, (Allan's is the best), small bottle good Eau-de-Cologne, face towel, a housewife, two cellular shirts or blouses, a cake of good soap (Icilma is best), and folded in the flap the lightest possible macintosh, coming down to our knees.

In the light of our experience, were we doing it again, we would say that *one* spare shirt or blouse is sufficient, and *one*

change of underclothing. We found everywhere that washing was done very willingly, quickly, cheaply, and well.

As to waterproofs, girls should not carry a ladies' one. These are usually difficult to fold in a small space, and as style is not a matter of moment, a man's should be used. In the way of hats nothing is better than a "Liberty" Panama. Girls walking also do not as a rule appreciate what a great convenience pockets can be, and D's suit, made of a light weight tweed, contained the following:—two outside ones on the skirt; two on the jacket, one on each sleeve for tickets, &c.; and one on each of her cellular blouses. Except the sleeve pockets any one of these was big enough to hold Baedeker we found.

We did not carry field glasses. These are unnecessary except where climbing is anticipated. We carried, however, a small compass, value 2s. 6d., and found it a convenience, and also a Baedeker, which still maintains, in our opinion, its premier position among Guide Books, though we found, even the last edition out of date in certain particulars.

No one should go on a Walking Tour without a camera. With one exception, they are all, alas! cumbersome; if carried in your knapsack, just at the moment you want them, they have to be unpacked and the moment is lost. If they are of the folding Kodak type, they mean an extra strap on one's shoulders. In so far as views of places of interest are concerned, everywhere on the Continent, nowadays, excellent Picture Post Cards can be obtained, quite as good as English ones, if not better, and at half the cost. They are usually 60 centimes per dozen. For anything else, one cannot do better than carry one of the Ticka cameras, made by Houghtons, of London. These little cameras, which are of the shape and size of a large watch, only cost 8s. 6d. Their load of films (a roll of 25) costs 9d. The pictures they take, though no larger than a postage stamp, are, as we can testify from personal experience, extremely good and clear, and can be enlarged to quarter plate size when one returns, at a very moderate cost.

Doubtless by the time these notes are in print, the manufacturers will have established agencies all over the Continent, but at the time we were there (in June, 1907) they were quite unknown, and excited a good deal of interest. Indeed, had

we been so minded, and made the necessary arrangements, we could have paid a large part of our expenses by acting as pedlars for them.

A good many people advised us to carry a spare pair of boots. We did not do so, and still see no necessity for adding their weight to one's traps. We each of us wore an oldish pair of boots to which our feet had become used, re-soled before starting, as heavily as the uppers would stand; and of foot troubles, the *bête noir* of pedestrians, we had none, which bathing the feet, a reasonable use of foot powder, and a change into soft shoes, did not readily relieve.

We did not have passports, and found them unnecessary. For girls walking alone, however, they might be advisable, since they form a ready means of identification in case of any bother. They can be obtained through Cook's at a fee of, we think, 3s. 6d.

For our money, we changed £10 into French gold at Cook's, and £10 into French notes. These we carried separately. The small amount additional we could afford, we carried in English sovereigns; and we may here say that although English sovereigns will be taken in any large town or at the bigger hotels (which we avoided like the plague), they are *not* readily accepted in smaller places, chiefly, we suppose, on account of the difficulty the recipients have in getting rid of them.

We took return tickets from London to Havre, 3rd class rail, 1st class boat. The return works out at £2 odd. These tickets allow one to return from any Port west of Havre from which there is a Passenger Steamer to Southampton, and in connection with them Cook's issue a specially cheap return from any point north, to London.

Acting in the belief, which we found later to be well founded, that any one walking for pleasure would be considered slightly mad, we wore shabby, nondescript, but comfortable clothes, and made no pretence to appearances.

Thus furnished, on Thursday, the 6th of June, with "our bundles on our shoulders," we set forth on the third class diner bound, not for Philadelphia, like the gentleman in the song, but in search of such adventure as the day, good company, and very little money might bring forth.

(To be continued.)